

## Mary Berenson and *The Guide to the Italian Pictures at Hampton Court*

Ilaria Della Monica

1894 was crucial for the evolution of connoisseurship in the lives of the future Berenson couple. That year saw the publication of both *The Venetian Painters of the Renaissance*, the first book by Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), and *The Guide to the Italian Pictures at Hampton Court* by Mary, writing pseudonymously as Mary Logan (1864–1945).<sup>1</sup>

The clear distinction of names in these two works hardly reflects their composition and true authorship, and it would be better to regard them as the result of a joint conceptual effort by the two art historians, who had at this point been united for at least four years in a personal and intellectual relationship. Indeed, a careful reading of Mary's diaries and letters, as well as her many notes, housed in the Villa I Tatti archives, reveals that since at least 1891 Bernard and Mary were nurturing the projects for these texts. Their research involved crossing Italy and Europe to visit numerous churches, museums, and private collections, consulting early art historical sources and the authority of distinguished scholars. Finally, comparing numerous photographs of works of art was a crucial part of their working method.

It was Mary herself who on more than one occasion indicated the motive for the authorial division of the two volumes — a social rather than scholarly reason, seemingly prompted by her mother's invitation not to unite the names of the authors publicly on the two frontispieces. In 1894 Mary was still the wife of the Irish barrister Frank Costelloe, whom she had known during her student years at Harvard in 1884 and 1885; as his wife she had followed him to England, where she was soon joined by her whole family. Her subsequent acquaintance with Bernard Berenson, her falling in love with him, and her passion for the history of art led her to leave England, her husband, and their two daughters. The union was over, but they were Roman Catholics and Mary was only free to marry upon Frank's death in 1899.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Berenson, *The Venetian Painters of the Renaissance* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1894); Mary Logan, *The Guide to the Italian Pictures at Hampton Court*, Kyrle Pamphlets, 2 (London: Innes, 1894). I should like to extend my deepest gratitude to Michael Gorman, whose assiduous research and generous sharing of resources have broadened the world of the Berensons and made it better known for many scholars. Thanks also go to Stefano Bozolo, Giovanni Pagliarulo, and Francesco Ventrella, my preferred interlocutors and attentive readers of these pages.

### 1891: Bernard and Mary visiting English museums and collections

Documentation for the Berenson's life and commitments, as well as for the various stages of gestation of the pair of texts, is found above all in two of Mary's diaries, housed at I Tatti: an appointments diary of 1891 and a personal diary, which begins in August 1891 and concludes in November 1893.<sup>2</sup> The first records the events of the early months of 1891, spent in England and marked by a series of lectures on art given by Bernard, meetings with intellectuals and art historians, including Lady Elizabeth Eastlake (1809–1893), and repeated visits to the National Gallery and Hampton Court.

In a general recollection of those times forty years later, when she was engaged on writing the unpublished biography of Bernard,<sup>3</sup> Mary nostalgically recalled the familiarity of the private collections of Mr Robert Benson and Mr Mond, Bridgewater House, and then the 'many golden days full of fascinating work at Hampton Court!':

It was at this time that we decided to write about the Italian Pictures at Hampton Court, a charming little gallery almost unknown to students of Italian painting. There we went whenever we were free, and the result was a short 'Guide' which was published for two pence by the Kyrle Society.<sup>4</sup>

Mary's words are striking for their repeated and emphatic use of 'we', related to the enthusiasm for a shared experience but also referring to a joint commitment to undertake the work of studying this understudied collection of Italian pictures in the royal residence.<sup>5</sup> Evidence that the adoption of 'we' was not merely the fruit of nostalgia for a past full of passions and discoveries is provided by the same usage in her diaries and letters

<sup>2</sup> Mary Berenson diary, 1891, Florence, Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Biblioteca Berenson, The Bernard and Mary Berenson Papers (BMBP), 20.7; Mary Berenson diary, 1891–1893, BMBP, 20.5. This latter is the first in the series of Mary's diaries held at I Tatti. The first fifty-four pages of this pocket journal-notebook contain a series of entries made by Bernard in 1888 and 1889, and constitute a fragment of a hitherto unnoticed diary, not mentioned by any biographical studies, recently transcribed and studied by Michael Gorman. For this diary see also, Iliaria Della Monica, 'Notes on Mary Berenson's Diary (1891–1893)', *Visual Resources*, 33 (2017), 140–57. Further references to Mary's 1891–1893 diary are given after quotations in the text by date.

<sup>3</sup> According to Tiffany Johnston, Mary's biographer (forthcoming), Mary appears to have done most of this writing between 1931 and 1933.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Berenson Writings, unpublished: Life of Bernard Berenson, chap. 8 [10]; and chap. 8 [7], BMBP, 22C.10.

<sup>5</sup> Among existing guidebooks and studies of the artworks at Hampton Court by British women were, Anna Jameson, *A Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and near London*, 2 parts (London: Murray, 1842), part II; and Julia Cartwright, *Mantegna and Francia* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1881).

written between 1891 and 1893, a three-year period in which the idea of writing the *Guide* was conceived and developed.<sup>6</sup>

The appointments diary of 1891 refers to nine visits to Hampton Court made by Bernard and Mary in the month stretching from 13 April to 13 May.<sup>7</sup> The project for research and publication appears to have taken form immediately, since in the second half of August, writing to her mother from Berlin, Mary asks what the latter thought of the ‘Hampton Court thing’ and informs her that she is studying the paintings of Correggio and Dosso Dossi with a view to that project.<sup>8</sup> In October, writing from Venice, she announced to her mother: ‘the “lives” are almost all sketched out already in our Hampton Court affair, but I think I can write better now. At any rate, I am more sure of my ground’ (HWSP, 21 October 1891).

### 1892: writing together

However, beginning in 1892, Mary began to speak of the text being the work of a couple: first positively, as on 21 February when she noted in her diary, ‘in the evening we went over our Hampton Court catalogue and the article on Titian’; then with displeasure and regret, when Bernhard had not respected his promise to devote time to writing the text:

There is only one cloud, and that is that in spite of our promises, we never seem to work upon our Hampton Court Guide. We planned to do so much this winter, and Bernhard has often promised he would have it ready for me to take back to London when I go, but I doubt it. (14 March 1892)

And again:

It would be hard for me to put into words the unhappiness that comes over me sometimes when I see that, even where he has solemnly promised to do it, and where there is every motive to lead him to work, Bernhard will not take the trouble. We often quarrel over it. If I could make up my mind to it, it would be easier. But he promises me each time that he will do it and is hurt and discouraged when I cannot believe him. I can’t do the work. I would so gladly. Of course when I see

<sup>6</sup> For the collaboration between Bernard and Mary, see Tiffany L. Johnston, ‘The Correggiosity of Correggio: On the Origin of Berensonian Connoisseurship’, *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 19 (2016), 385–425; and Della Monica, ‘Notes’.

<sup>7</sup> In the 1891 calendar the dates for visits at Hampton Court are: 13, 14, 18, 20, 22, 23 April (on 15 April a visit to Lady Eastlake is recorded), and 11, 12, 13 May.

<sup>8</sup> Mary to Hannah Whitall, 19 August 1891 and 27 August 1891, Indiana University Bloomington, Lilly Library, Hannah Whitall Smith Papers (HWSP). Further references to these letters are given after quotations in the text by date.

him like this in regard to the Hampton Court Guide, I cannot help foreseeing that it will be equally easy for him all along to find excuses for not doing any work of the kind [...]. I cannot blame myself for having set my heart on doing the Hampton Court Guide, for at one time he was as enthusiastic as I over it, and he has promised me, so many times to do it this winter.<sup>9</sup>

Work seems to have had a more promising start after mid-March when Mary wrote, on the 21st of that month, doubling the possessive adjective of the first-person plural: ‘in the evening we wrote our introduction to our Hampton Court Guide.’ The following day, Mary was pleased that Bernard ‘[wrote] the sketch of the Venetian School for the Hampton Court Guide’, and likewise a few days later, on 27 March, when she writes: ‘Bernard began his preface to the Hampton Court Guide, and wrote three hours.’ On 27 April the two began to write ‘our’ Correggio for Hampton Court, ‘quarrelling atrociously over it’, but on the evening of 12 May it seems that the two had ‘finished our [Hampton Court] Guide’. Again ‘we’; again ‘our’.

The letters written to her mother in the same period also bear witness to the evolution of the work, which after its reshaping and much improvement was now ready for publication. On 10 April 1892, Mary writes about the Hampton Court *Guide*:

It has a long preface on the evolution of Venetian painting, and I would like to arrange to have that printed along with a complete handbook to the paintings in Venice which I could do, and which wants to be done very much. Ruskin and Hare do not begin to cover the ground — to say nothing else.<sup>10</sup>

However, some days later, on 30 April, she defines it ‘pretty much remodelled and greatly improved’.<sup>11</sup>

The same sharing of labour also appears in the words of Bernard, in a letter to Katharine Bradley (one half of the poetic couple who wrote as Michael Field) after he had sent some of ‘our short articles’ on painting:

It is so sweet of you to send us real criticisms of our short articles. Do not think that I mean to cavil at your criticism, but [...] let me remind you that these short articles by us are by no

<sup>9</sup> BMBP, 15 March 1892. For this period and these sentiments see also Tiffany L. Johnston, ‘Mary Berenson and the Conception of Connoisseurship’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University Bloomington, 2001), pp. 479–80.

<sup>10</sup> HWSP, 10 April 1892. For Bernard and Mary’s emancipation from Ruskin’s model, see also Della Monica, ‘Notes’, pp. 148–49.

<sup>11</sup> HWSP, 30 April 1892. At the end of the sentence Mary writes, ‘I hope I can get it printed.’

means meant to be complete, but merely as brief and sufficient prefaces to the pictures at Hampton Court.<sup>12</sup>

### 1893: 'my Hampton Court Guide'

After a period of over a year in which the diary contains no mention of the *Guide*, Mary begins to speak about it in the first person beginning in August 1893, as 'my Hampton Court Guide'. She refers to it three times between 27 August and 1 September while in Munich, where she says she remained to write the *Guide*, not joining her travelling companions' visits to cities and museums; many more mentions follow in October, and then, on 9 November, she announces, 'finished my Hampton Court Guide'. On approximately the same dates, Mary alludes to her assiduous work on the *Guide*, with perhaps even greater insistence, in letters to her family: she is 'grappling with Tintoretto' (HWSP, 4 September 1893), or 'waiting for the letters' from the publisher (5 September 1893). On 28 October Mary tells her mother that on the following day she will send her the preface to the *Guide*, together with a copy for her father and another for her brother Logan.

A letter to her father dated 24 November 1893 appears more or less explicitly to contain the reason for Mary's change of perspective, as well as unequivocal reasoning for the decision to assign only her own name to the *Guide*. It is a long, structured letter, beginning with a statement of her recent progress as regards Italian art and culture and including the announcement that the *Guide* is now ready, even if there have been problems with publishing it.<sup>13</sup> At this point Mary gives an explicit reason for her wishes: 'I am anxious to publish it because it will at once give me an independent standing among professional people, who now of course know me, if they know me at all, as a pupil of Berenson.'<sup>14</sup> That Mary succeeded in her aims to be included among professional people is clear from the words used by William Hutton in his own guide to Hampton Court published two years later, in which, speaking of the condition of Mantegna's works, he defines her judgement as that of 'one of the latest and most competent critics'.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Bernard to Katharine Bradley, 5 February 1892, London, British Library, Michael Field Correspondence, Add MS 45855, fols 93–95<sup>v</sup>, emphasis in original.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Berenson to Robert Smith, HWSP, 24 November 1893. An excerpt of the letter is published in *Mary Berenson: A Self-Portrait from Her Diaries & Letters*, ed. by Barbara Strachey and Jayne Samuels (London: Hamilton, 1985): 'I got my Hampton Court book all ready, but as mother writes me that Mr Britten says his Committee will not be ready to publish it for some time to come, I think I shall try it with another publisher' (pp. 54–55).

<sup>14</sup> In another letter to her father Mary wrote: 'I see the way open to me [...] of becoming really a scholar in all that pertains to the art of the Renaissance' (HWSP, 16 November 1893). See also *Mary Berenson*, ed. by Strachey and Samuels, p. 54.

<sup>15</sup> William Holden Hutton, *Hampton Court* (London: Nimmo, 1897), p. 185.

In the same letter to her father, Mary says she is satisfied more by the ideas contained in it than by the writing, but above all by the new idea of a psychological criticism that she believes signalled an advance in the critical method of the history of art, and was likely to add something to the visions of scholars such as Jean Paul Richter or Gustavo Frizzoni, two of the closest followers of Giovanni Morelli's method.<sup>16</sup>

### 1894–95: the years of the first publications

The explicit reference to a new method that Mary made in her letter — a method shared with Berenson — was inspired by the same ideas, and the same spirit, we find set out in the three articles published in those same years, 1894 to 1895: 'The New and the Old Art Criticism', 'The New Art Criticism', and 'On a Recent Criticism of the Works of Lorenzo Lotto'.<sup>17</sup> It was founded (as has been noted a number of times) on the new scientific approach of Giovanni Morelli, considered the Darwin of the history of art, on the psychological theories of William James, who had taught philosophy and psychology to both Mary and Bernard at Harvard, and on theories mediated through contemporary literary criticism, alluding to one's response to, rather than judgement of, the work of art itself.<sup>18</sup>

In her letter to her father, after having underlined the desire for intellectual independence intrinsic to her wish to publish the *Guide*, Mary also indicates the germ of the idea behind *Venetian Painters*, emphasizing among other things the close ties its text had with the *Guide* because of their shared focus on the Venetian School of painting, which was the true testing ground shared by these works. Mary states that she had written an 'essay' on Venetian paintings, which formed the most prominent section

<sup>16</sup> Writing the review of Bernard's monograph on Lorenzo Lotto, Mary makes explicit the goal of the new method: as '*the psychological reconstruction of the artistic personality of the painter*' built on a Morellian solid base. See Mary Logan, 'On a Recent Criticism of the Works of Lorenzo Lotto', *Studio*, May 1895, pp. 63–67 (p. 64), emphasis in original. For these ideas and their exposition in these years by Mary, see also Della Monica, 'Notes', pp. 149–52.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Whitall Costelloe, 'The New and the Old Art Criticism', *Nineteenth Century*, May 1894, pp. 828–37; Mary Logan, 'The New Art Criticism', *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1895, pp. 263–70; Logan, 'On a Recent Criticism'.

<sup>18</sup> For the literary criticism by Richard Green Moulton regarding Shakespeare, see Johnston, 'Mary Berenson and the Conception of Connoisseurship', pp. 556–57; but for their special appreciation of works of art, see also Francesco Ventrella, 'Befriending Botticelli: Psychology and Connoisseurship at the Fin de Siècle', in *Botticelli Past and Present*, ed. by Ana Debenedetti and Caroline Elam (London: UCL Press, 2019), pp. 116–47 <<https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781787354593>>; Jonathan Nelson's article in this issue of 19; and some of the essays included in our online exhibition 'Berenson & Harvard: Bernard and Mary as Students' <<https://berenson.itatti.harvard.edu/berenson/>> [accessed 12 March 2019].

of Italian works housed at Hampton Court, and which were to be the sole subject of the text signed by Bernard. This essay was written in 1891 and submitted to the publisher Putnam, together with what seems to be a draft catalogue of Hampton Court. Having received Putnam's invitation to tone down the detailed descriptions of the British collection, perhaps obscure for the public, and substitute them with a more general treatment, Mary decided to yield her ground to Bernard for this work and asked him to add 'lists of all the genuine works of the Venetian Painters'. For this project, promptly accepted by the publisher, Mary anticipated using the names of both authors, 'because I thought, and still think, that the best way to answer scandal, is to tell the exact truth as openly as possible, namely that we have been doing serious and scholarly work together' (HWSP, 24 November 1893). The decision appears to have been agreeable to the publisher, but not to her mother:

Mother opposed so decidedly that I yielded the point and asked Mr Putnam to leave out my name. This I thought was only fair, as the smaller part of the work is mine, and then I am using his notes for the Hampton Court book which is to appear in my name. (HWSP, 24 November 1893)

Mary concluded, as if seeking a peaceable solution, that she felt more attached to the *Guide* than she did to the work on the Venetians, in which, she declared, 'the smaller part of work is mine'.<sup>19</sup>

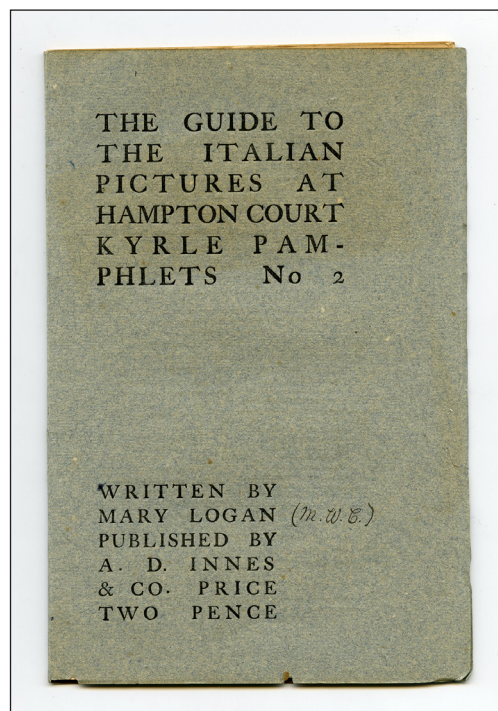
### **Mary's Hampton Court Guide**

While much has already been written about *The Venetian Painters of the Renaissance* published under Bernard's name, little attention has thus far been given to the Hampton Court *Guide*, just as scant consideration has been accorded to its author. Having been unsuccessfully presented to James Britten for publication (HWSP, 24 November 1893), Mary's brief text was ultimately printed by A. D. Innes & Co. for the Kyrle Society, about which we learn something from Gustavo Frizzoni's review of the *Guide* in the following year. This worthy and philanthropic body was dedicated to bringing 'beauty home to the people', and its prerogatives included the publication of 'simple and inexpensive pamphlets'.<sup>20</sup> Mary's volume was perfectly

<sup>19</sup> It remains to be seen why Bernard, after having legalized his union with Mary, continued to sign the lists with his name alone. Study of the preparatory material for these volumes always reveals assiduous involvement by Mary, an 'exacting note taker with a proficiency for cataloguing' (Johnston, 'Mary Berenson and the Conception of Connoisseurship', p. 452).

<sup>20</sup> Gustavo Frizzoni, review of Mary Logan, *The Guide to the Italian Pictures at Hampton Court*, *Archivio storico dell'arte*, 2nd ser., 1 (1895), 322–28: 'The Kyrle Soci-

suiting to this principle, with its cover made of slightly thicker paper than the pages within and its price of two pence. The front cover, with title, series, author, printer, and price, is composed of two evenly spaced blocks of text, the upper larger than the lower (*Fig. 1*), with an elegantly sober typeface typical of the Britain of those years.<sup>21</sup> The Berenson Library owns many such publications, but this feature also has more direct echoes of Mary and Bernard, as in the design of their *ex libris* plate.



*Fig. 1:* Cover of Mary's personal copy of *The Guide to the Italian Pictures at Hampton Court* kept in the Bernard and Mary Berenson Papers at I Tatti.

ety, founded in 1877 and seeking to reach its maximum potential [...] has as its aim the decoration of workers' meeting-places, hospital rooms, all places of popular congregation, to act as monitor [...] and finally to publish simple and inexpensive pamphlets on subjects regarding art' (p. 322, my translation). For the history and activity of this society, see Robyn M. Curtis, 'English Women and the Late-Nineteenth Century Open Space Movement' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Australian National University, 2016) <<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/111773/1/Curtis%20Thesis%202017.pdf>> [accessed 12 March 2019]. See also, Robert Whelan, 'Octavia Hill and the Environmental Movement', *Civitas Review*, 6.1 (2009), 1–8 <<http://www.civitas.org.uk/pdf/CivitasReviewApril2009.pdf>> [accessed 12 March 2019].

<sup>21</sup> The cover of the *Guide* has the same clean typography and spacious setting which can be found in the volumes published by the British Doves Press in the same year or just after.



A refined simplicity also seems to come across in the *Guide's* little plan of the State Rooms at Hampton Court, with its deliberately simple graphic style and names in handcrafted italics, in stark contrast to the typeface used in the 1881 catalogue by Ernest Law.<sup>22</sup> Above all, it sought to provide a new, clear-headed tool, in the sense of a scholarly essay aiming to establish the basis for a new history of art founded on the reconstruction of individual painters' artistic qualities rather than their biographies, in which correct attributions had a prominent place.

The guidebook opens with a brief preface in which Mary justifies the succinctness of the text by her need to respect the limits imposed by a series publication. However, she does not fail to assert the principles that generated the book. Starting out with the observation that the Italian paintings in the Royal Collection were the subject of numerous errors of attribution — errors often caused by the vanity of collectors and the greed of dealers, in a period when the lack of photographs and difficulties in travel made correct identification more difficult — Mary proceeds according to a method that is more scientific in nature.

The path she took had already partly been shaped by distinguished scholars: Giovanni Morelli, with his catalogue of the Borghese and Doria Pamphilj galleries in Rome, which was exemplary of his method, and of those in Dresden and Munich; his followers, Frizzoni and Richter; and last but not least, Bernard Berenson, with his *Venetian Painters*.<sup>23</sup> Mary's declared intention, beyond the application of a scientific method — in its strict sense of the sole study of the painting itself — was to refer to the history underlying the pictorial phenomenon: a history with substance, avoiding the anecdotal accounts of artists that usually contribute very little to true understanding.

### The structure of Mary's *Guide*

The text is composed of seven sections, respectively dedicated to the Venetian School (I); Milan and, in particular, Marco d'Oggiono (II); Ferrara–Venice, for the work of Dosso Dossi (III); the area between Ferrara and Bologna, for Lorenzo Costa and Francesco Francia (IV); Correggio and Parmigianino (V); eighteenth-century Venice (VI); and finally, Andrea Mantegna (VII). The Venetian School, which forms the opening material,

<sup>22</sup> Ernest Law, *A Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in the Royal Collection at Hampton Court* (London: Bell, 1881), p. vi.

<sup>23</sup> 'Frizzoni's [writings] upon the Madrid and the National Galleries, Dr. Richter's upon the National Gallery and upon Leonardo' (Logan, *Guide*, p. 5). Mary refers to Gustavo Frizzoni, *I capolavori della Pinacoteca del Prado in Madrid* (Roma: Unione Grafica, 1893) and Jean Paul Richter, *Italian Art in the National Gallery* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1883).

is represented by the most substantial number of paintings in the collection, a group which (as Mary indicates) is able to convey an almost uninterrupted sense of what the city of Venice produced in the most interesting period of its artistic history. Even if the intention was to follow a chronological order, so as to obtain a clearer visual idea of artistic development, an exception occurs immediately with the presence in the first room of a large canvas by Canaletto with a depiction of the ruins of Rome. This was a work which ought to conclude the itinerary, having been painted in the eighteenth century, but which lends itself in exemplary fashion to representing the presence of attributional problems that were common to many of these paintings. In this particular case Mary blames John Ruskin, whose potent moralizing declamations were not always supported by adequate connoisseurship, creating confusion between the oeuvre of this great master and those of his contemporaries Bellotto and Marieschi.<sup>24</sup>

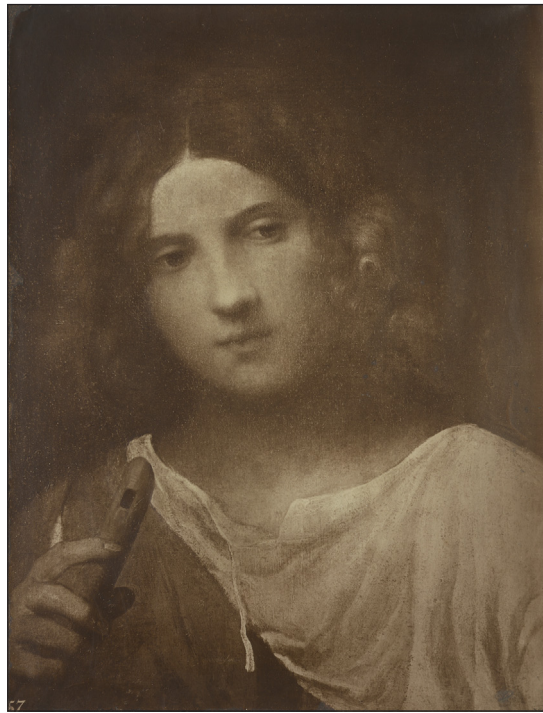
Like Bernard in *Venetian Painters*, Mary begins her investigation of the Venetian School as found at Hampton Court with the Bellini brothers: Giovanni, the more poetic of the two, and Gentile, also an innovator, but in the sense of a 'decided bent toward realism' (*Guide*, p. 9). The name of Giovanni, unequalled in the period before Giorgione, is brought up in reference to the *Bust Portrait of a Young Man* (no. 117), which Mary instead ascribes to one of his pupils, Giovanni Bissolo. This new attribution is confirmed in Bernard's listing of it in *Venetian Painters* (p. 88).

The two texts present analogous scholarly results, securely establishing the authorship of the same works and adopting many of the new attributions. Furthermore, they show themselves to be complementary in the supporting material, namely the pages in Bernard's text which precede the lists of known works, and those in Mary's forming the chapters dedicated to each section — the 'short articles' referred to by Bernard in his letters to Michael Field. This complementary nature seems essentially to depend on the different register of the texts themselves: one a guide, the other an essay. The *Guide* prescribes preparatory study of the culture of a given place and the history of individual artists, as a means of good practice rather than a necessity, and for a better understanding of artistic expression, inviting us to 'be content with what the pictures themselves can tell us' (p. 7). In *Venetian Painters*, on the other hand, we witness a true display of contextual study, with clear reference to the couple's application of texts relating to the places and works they studied, so often recorded in Mary's diaries. In this sense the pages of *Venetian Painters* lay the ground for this critical model. Its results were to appear with greater clarity in the monograph on

<sup>24</sup> In fact, Mary speaks of Ruskin with reference to the opinions he had expressed in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, in which he attributes to lesser painters the works of their master. For other notes about Ruskin and connoisseurship see BMBP, 31 August 1892.

Lotto that appeared soon thereafter. In her review of the latter, Mary was to point out how Bernard surpassed the rigid schemes of Morelli and opened the door to ‘psychological criticism’.<sup>25</sup>

Working on the shared territory of Venetian painting, the two texts sometimes examine the same works. One instance is Giorgione’s painting of a shepherd with a flute, housed at Hampton Court (*Fig. 2*). Paradigmatically, it served as the frontispiece of *Venetian Painters*, and in later editions actually became the cover illustration. Both the future spouses agreed on the fact that Giorgione’s activity coincided with ‘the brightest period of the Renaissance’,<sup>26</sup> and Mary compared the artist’s joyous vision of the human body with that of the Greeks, with the added introduction of landscape. Bernard, who asserted that the roots of Venetian painting



*Fig. 2:* Giorgione (attributed by Berenson), *Shepherd with a Flute*, c. 1510–15, oil on canvas, 62.5 × 49.1 cm, Royal Collection, Windsor Castle.

<sup>25</sup> For the moment in which Berenson went beyond Morelli’s ‘much ridiculed hands and ears and folds of drapery’, see also Patrizio Aiello, ‘Gustavo Frizzoni e Bernard Berenson’, *Concorso: arti e lettere*, 5 (2011), 7–30 <<https://doi.org/10.13130/2421-5376/5063>> (p. 16).

<sup>26</sup> Logan, *Guide*, p. 12. In *Venetian Painters*, Berenson wrote that ‘it would be really hard to say more about Giorgione than this, that his pictures are the perfect reflex of the Renaissance at its height’ (p. 30).

lay in the joy of colour, maintained that with the few pictures painted during his brief life, Giorgione gave proof of calming the turbulent passions expressed by earlier painting, turning them ‘into a sincere appreciation of beauty and human relations’ (*Venetian Painters*, p. 30). And if — according to Mary — Giorgione in ‘all his work expressed so perfectly the spirit of that brief period when beauty and delight, untroubled by religious or political problems, were the inheritance of every cultivated Venetian’, the *Shepherd with a Flute* was certainly the painting more expressive of that sentiment:

The face is so radiantly beautiful, that even retouching and blackening have not been able to hide the fine oval, the exquisite proportions, the lovely brow, the warm eyes, the sweet mouth, the soft waving hair, and the easy poise of the head.  
(*Guide*, p. 13)

Having listed the few other secure paintings by Giorgione, with explicit reference to Berenson’s *Venetian Painters* and citing the same works included there, Mary proceeds to an analysis of the Venetians, sometimes proposing new attributions, as in the case of *The Tribute Money*, which Law’s Hampton Court catalogue of 1881 had ascribed to Paolo Veronese and which Mary gives to Bassano,<sup>27</sup> or that of the *Dominican Friar* which the same catalogue had listed as Jacopo Bassano, but which Mary and Bernard attribute to Tintoretto (*Guide*, p. 35).

### **Mary’s treatment of Lotto’s paintings in the *Guide***

This is not the place for an examination of the numerous Italian paintings listed by Mary in the *Guide* (or even the Venetian ones), but we may select one instance that bears signs of her dual authorship with Bernard, that of Lorenzo Lotto. Two portraits of his are in the Royal Collection, and he is presented in *Venetian Painters* as a watershed during a key period of Italian history. We should also bear in mind the fundamental role played by the artist in the scholarly couple’s travels, and the monograph about him written by Bernard and reviewed by Mary.

In the *Guide* Mary turns to Lotto after having discussed Titian, immediately establishing their different training and placing the former in the workshop of Alvise Vivarini. For her, the stylistic dependence is perceivable if one respects the prescribed norm of treating subjects in chronological order. The first portrait by Lotto discussed by Mary, the *Male Head* (no. 114), formerly believed to have been a self-portrait by Giorgione, fully

<sup>27</sup> Handwritten notes on the 1881 catalogue by Ernest Law, p. 71, no. 223 (Biblioteca Berenson, N1350.L38 1881) and on the verso of the photograph (Biblioteca Berenson, Fototeca, V82.6).

reflects his points of contact with Alvisè Vivarini ‘in its cool grey tones and carefully studied lighting’. Although it is one of his youthful works, it already reveals what would become his distinctive trait: it is ‘especially fine in interpretation of individuality’. His portraits are ‘more analytical and sympathetic than any others of the Renaissance’, and his achievements appear to resemble those of Titian, with a swifter evolution (*Guide*, p. 20). Thus it was in his youthful portrait, and likewise in the one painted in the middle of his career, the *Portrait of Andrea Odoni*, in which, now in full command of his own pictorial technique, Lotto describes the features of a not entirely agreeable man with great psychological depth (p. 20). Bernard’s treatment of Lotto in *Venetian Painters* is brief, perhaps because he was reserving his more extensive discussion of the artist for the monograph that was soon to follow, but those few lines suffice to emphasize the same concepts. Indeed, he described a painter who was ‘sensitive of feeling’, whose characteristics emerge above all through the portraiture he produced in Venice, Bergamo, and the Marches (p. 44). This treatment of the Venetian artist led to a new way of contemplating his work, and this was to mark Bernard’s monograph published in 1895. Mary clearly alludes to it in her review of the volume published in the *Studio* in the same year, underlining how this text was the first in which the author spoke specifically of ‘constructive art criticism’, seeking, through the study of chronology, to offer the ‘*psychological reconstruction of the artistic personality of the painter*’.<sup>28</sup>

Until now we have dealt with the two scholars’ continuous conversation regarding their common ground. The fruit of this exchange of views is reflected in their texts, with usually similar results, while traces of their preparatory stage can be seen in various manuscript sources housed in the I Tatti archives: in the texts annotated in both their hands, as in the 1881 Hampton Court catalogue mentioned above, or in Mary’s copy of *Venetian Painters*, which Bernard inscribed ‘To “Mary Logan” with the author’s compliments’.<sup>29</sup> And then of course there are the photographs, or more precisely, their backs. Elsewhere we have indicated how the historical material of the Berenson photographic archive can be regarded as basic material support for the critical debate between the two, with the signs it bears of having been argued over and corrected. The different, alternating handwriting of Bernard and Mary suggest the interwoven refrains of a dialogue.<sup>30</sup>

There are not many images in the Berenson photographic archives documenting the period of Bernard and Mary’s study of the paintings at Hampton Court. Their research for the *Guide* took place at the very

<sup>28</sup> Logan, ‘On a Recent Criticism’, p. 64, emphasis in original; regarding this, see also Ventrella, ‘Befriending Botticelli’.

<sup>29</sup> The dedication ends with the place and the date, ‘Florence, March 16, 1894’ (Biblioteca Berenson, Spc ND621.V5 B5 1894 S).

<sup>30</sup> Johnston, ‘Correggiosity of Correggio’; Della Monica, ‘Notes’.

beginning of the establishment of the I Tatti collection, which was to grow over the years thanks to acquisitions and gifts from institutions, friends, and collectors, spurred on by constant requests from the Berensons, as proved by a reading of the correspondence (Della Monica, 'Notes', pp. 152–54). These images include a homogeneous series of small photographs with the dry stamp of the royal copyright ('Copyright of H. M. the King. '), and are sometimes linen backed, following a common practice intended to increase their resilience, or mounted on card, which often precludes examining their backs. However, one can recognize Mary's hand in a small number of them, with a slightly faded ink, which also recurs in some annotations on the backs of images of Venetian pictures in the Uffizi. These dovetail with the notes in one of the first notebooks, marked No. 1, entitled 'Notes on Venetian Pictures in the Uffizi', and dated 1891–1892,<sup>31</sup> in which the pages are filled with swift handwriting and repeated cross references to secure attributions, and exclamation marks communicating excited discoveries of different, more satisfying identities for the authorship of certain paintings.<sup>32</sup> The great joy of this period comes across in Mary's unpublished life of Bernard, especially in her evocative description of their work together at this foundational time in both their own relationship and, as the analogy with the biblical story implies, the history of art:

What a passion it was for us in those days to whisper to each other a new name for old thing! I can hardly understand it now, for it has become so much the *thing* we care for, and not the name. But then! We used to wonder if Adam had half as much fun naming the animals, as we were having renaming those ancient paintings!<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Although most of the notes are in Mary's hand, there are a number of comments and annotations by Bernard.

<sup>32</sup> For this kind of notation see also the 1891–1893 diary and the large notebook with notes starting in 1890.

<sup>33</sup> Mary Berenson Writings, unpublished: Life of Bernard Berenson, chap. 10, p. 1, BMBP, 22C.10, emphasis in original.